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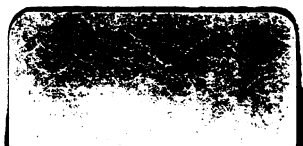
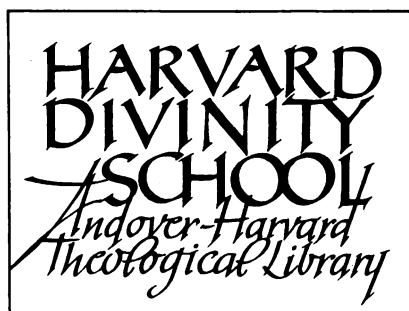
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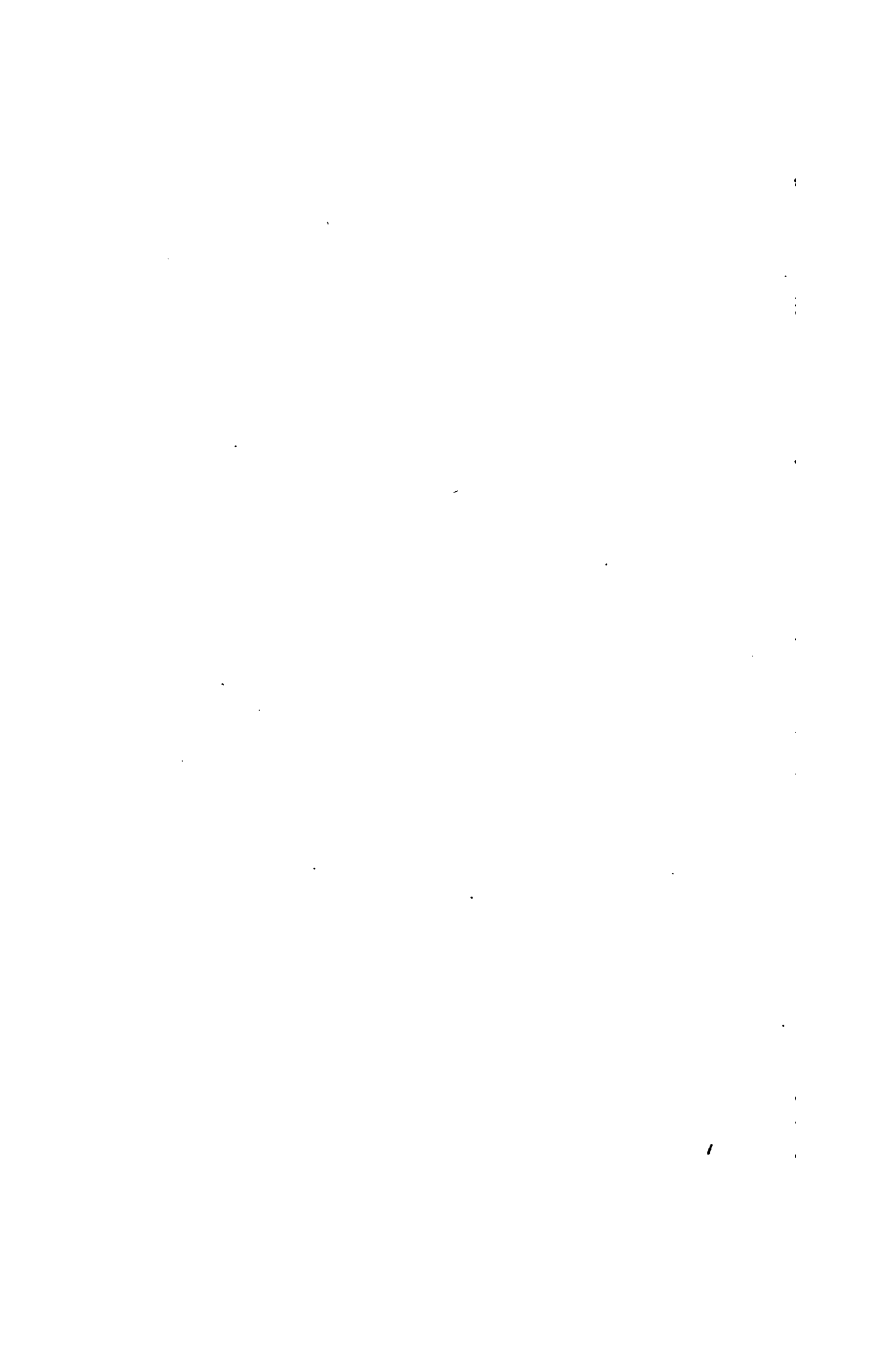
HANDBOOK OF THEISTIC DEVOTION

K. C. SEN

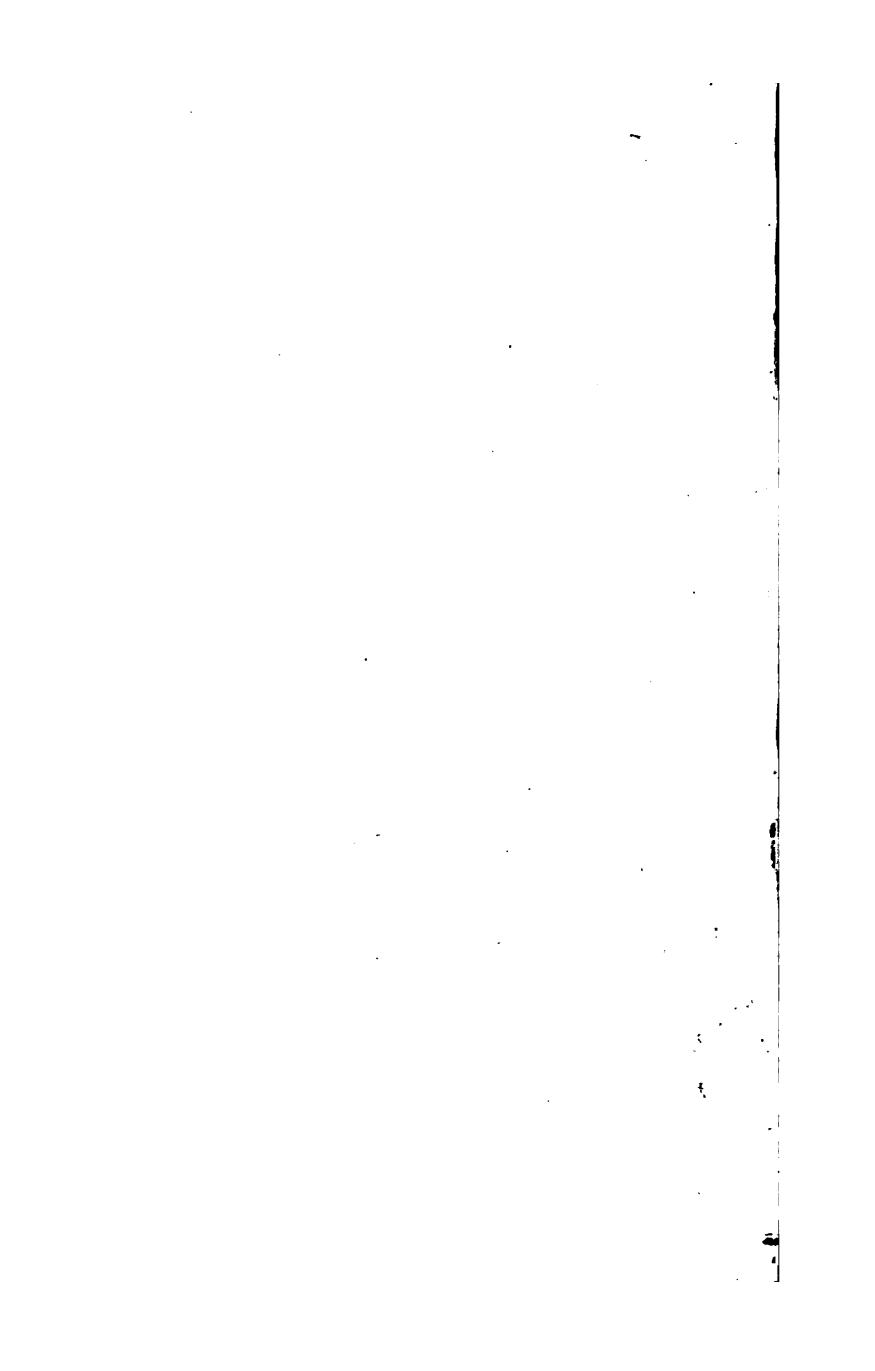
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HAND BOOK

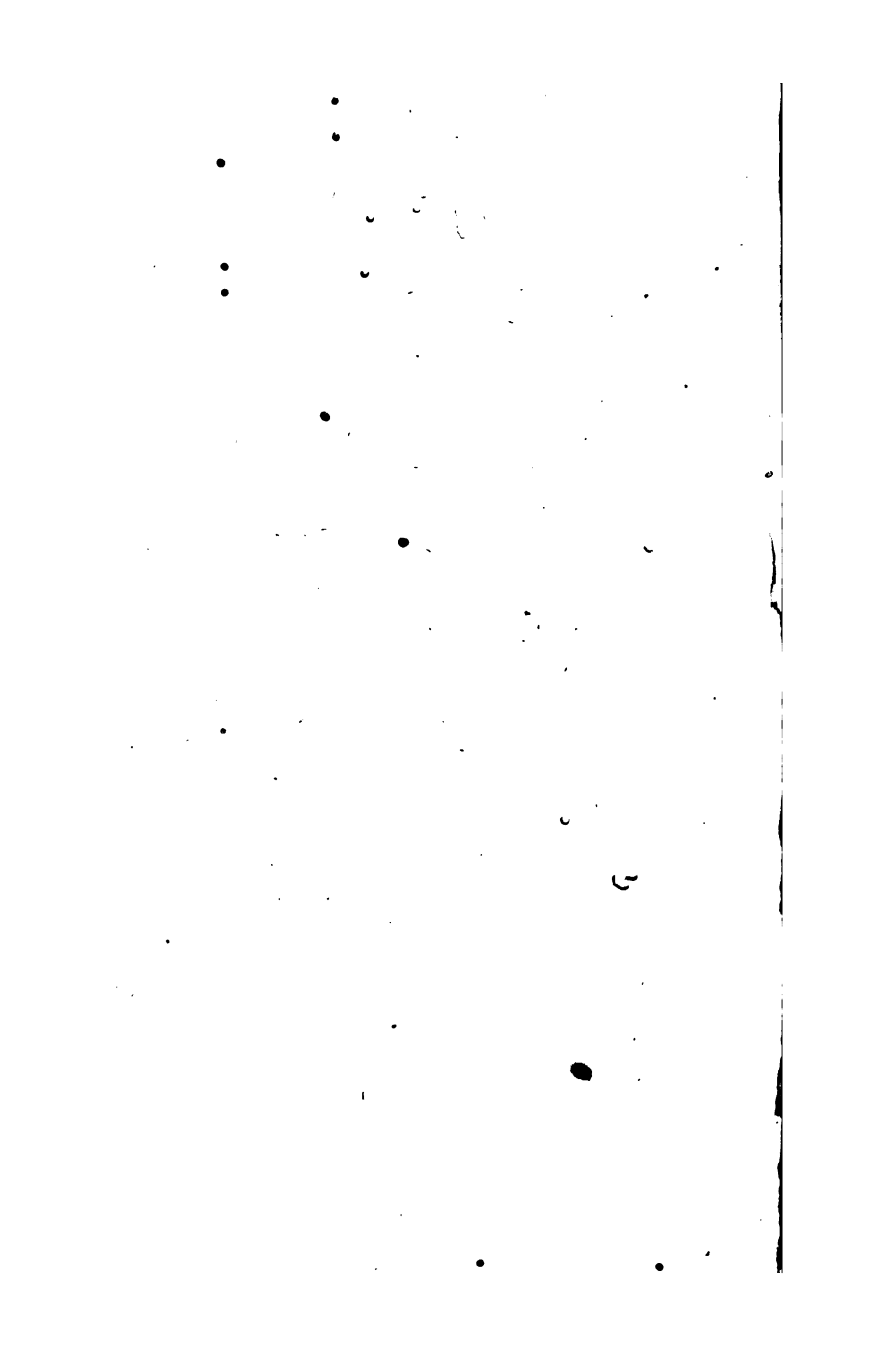
OF

THEISTIC DEVOTION.

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DAILY WORK.

LORD, I am about to engage myself in my daily work. As worldly business perverts the understanding, deadens spiritual susceptibilities and aspirations, excites avarice, cupidity, jealousy, pride and all the baser passions, I humbly surrender myself to thee, and beseech thee to deliver me from these evils. I cannot venture to enter the regions of worldly trials and temptations without invoking thine aid. Help me God.

LOVE.

I HUMBLY confess, O my God, that I have made a great mistake in my life. I have always believed that I should, and that I could, serve thee and the world conjointly. Alas ! I now feel I have deceived myself. He who serves thee must renounce worldliness altogether, and love thee exclusively. Help me then, dear Saviour, to make thee the only object of my affection, the ever-shining and beloved necklace of my heart.

HEAVENLY CAPTAIN.

It is no longer a river ; the sea, the open sea I behold all around, O God. The onward course of my life has brought my frail bark here, and I now feel more than I ever did before, the necessity of entire dependence upon thee. For who can navigate the sea ? Its length and breadth and depth are appalling to me. The tremendous storm, the roaring waves I dare not face. And then I know not which is the east and which is west. All is dark, dismal, and fearful. O Captain ! in thy hand must I leave the helm entirely amid all these dangers ; and that the heavy load, I carry with me, my own understanding which may cause me to sink at any moment, I will throw overboard. Guide me, O Heavenly Captain, into the haven of joy and blessedness.

ANGER.

O God, anger is a fit of passion, which though subdued for a time, returns as soon as exciting causes appear. I have

tried these twenty years to control it, but thou knowest, Master, that I have shamefully failed. Even now, though I have prayed so long, provocation upsets my temper and makes me think of revenge. When I first came unto thee, my Saviour, I brought unto thee a most unclean and vindictive heart. Thou hast taught me forbearance, but the root of the evil in me is not yet gone, and when trials come I cannot stand. Teach me such love that I may altogether subdue my evil passions.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

LORD, I have served my brothers and sisters laboriously and zealously these five and twenty years. But I have had no reward. They do not encourage me, they do not smile upon me. They do not say—well done, brother. They even annoy me and grieve me with words which indicate distrust. They do not love me as a brother, they do not respect my talents, they do not gratefully acknowledge my services. Instead of honoring me they treat me with disrespect; instead of encouraging me with kind words they damp my spirits and I feel no heart to work for them any longer. I feel, O my God, that they are bound to protect and honor and serve me, meet my wants, redress my grievances, add to my comforts, and increase my usefulness, for I have resigned myself into thy hands and their hands, and I have none else to look to. If my best friends give me up, where am I to go? If they persecute me, where shall I get comfort? If they do not serve me, wilt thou not judge them?

[ANSWER.]

Thou shalt not expect services in return for thy services, saith the Lord, if thou art faithful thy reward is in heaven. Seek no earthly reward, not even the smiles of friends. Even they of his own household shall persecute my servant; therefore be prepared for the worst. Go on serving thy brethren, no matter how they treat thee. Do not labor like the hireling, expecting compensation for thy services. But work disinterestedly, expecting nothing, claiming nothing, demanding nothing.

UNSTEADINESS.

FROM unsteadiness set me free, O my God. Chameleon-like I have changed my colors often and often. My character is unsteady, and the foundation thereof unstable. I am not to-day what I was yesterday, and to-morrow will find me an altered man. Those whose character thy hand has formed and shaped, change not, move not though the most adverse circumstances beset them and try their faith and purity. They are strong in thy strength, and they never compromise or sacrifice their principles. Make me, Kind God, firm as a rock.

DIVINE JUSTICE.

Thou art our Judge, O God, and thy judgment is severe. Thou judgest thy refractory children with strict and unyielding justice. Foolishly do many imagine that thou shalt apply the same standard to all. Thou requirest, Lord, more from those to whom thou hast given more. If we are possessed of greater talents, powers and privileges, and greater opportunities of doing good, sure it is that we shall be subjected to a most searching and strict examination and punished most severely for our transgressions and shortcomings. Help us, therefore, O God, to make a faithful and full use of our powers and opportunities, that we may be able to stand before thy judgment without fear.

OLD AGE.

THEY tell me, O Lord, I am getting old. I do not see, however, how my God, one can be old who has an ocean of work yet to perform. He who has almost finished his work on earth is no doubt old, and is so worn out, decrepit, despondent and misanthropic that he may be said to have completed his three score and ten. But, O my Master, how can I believe that my time has expired when I am just on the threshold of my work, and full of earnest hope and warm spirits. I am quite a young man, having just entered thy service. I am not, and will not be among the pensioners.

HUMILIATION.

WHY shall I feel dejected and humiliated if men revile and abuse me? Rather should I feel thankful unto thee, O Lord, that men are teaching me to be humble and lowly by their kind, though apparently unkind treatment. Teach me, my God, to feel my unworthiness.

RADICAL CURE.

PHYSICIAN, heal the maladies of my soul. I have tried the doctors and all the patent medicines of the world, but have found no benefit in them. Thou only canst heal me, and thy medicines alone can bring me relief. The evils in my outward life thou hast already remedied in a great measure. But as in my blood and deep in my bones the seeds of corruption are lodged, administer the remedies of heaven there, O God, and make me altogether clean and healthy. I have often heard thee say, thou Healer of the soul, that I must go out of this world for a few weeks for a change if I desire a complete renewal of health. Be it so, Lord, grant that I may breathe the purer air of heaven for some time in the regions of the saints above, and then return with renovated health.

THE DISTANT LAND.

WHAT is that land I see at a distance, half hid in mists yet bright enough to attract my heart? Is that a land of joy and salvation which thou hast, O my God, promised to weary pilgrims. Then glory, glory, glory to thy hallowed name! Lord, hasten my movements and make me run, that I may soon finish my journey. Thou whisperest, O God, the home is yet very far, and it will take fifty thousand years yet to reach it. Only fifty thousand, dear Lord! That is nothing if I am sure of reaching that sweet home.

ONE BODY.

THOU hast appointed thy servants, O Lord, to build one house, and not many houses. But they are building each a separate house for himself, because they do not agree, and condemn each other's building. Father, in this disagreement we see our pride, selfishness and infidelity. There is one dispensation of which we are parts, one body whereof we are members, and in one house, O God of providence, hast thou called us to dwell. May we have such faith and such union!

BEAUTY.

THERE is a beauty in thy face, dear Lord, which has fascinated thy devoted saints above. Even to this sinner thou hast partly revealed it, but my heart thou hast not yet won. O how hard and corrupt is my heart. If I see thee continually shall I not love thee? Yes.

NEW FLOWERS.

IN the gardens of the world all species of flowers have been numbered and classified. But in thy garden in Heaven new species grow which none ever saw before. Sweet ideas and sweet joys spring up, not only fresh flowers on the same tree, but fresh species of flowers, the like of which the heart never saw. Who knows what new light and joy thou wilt send to-morrow to thy humble worshipper?

TRUE FRIEND.

Is it true that even spiritual friendship is dissolved after a time, and that the best of friends in thy house part? Lord, is this possible? How can I cease to love and esteem him whom I have once accepted for better and worse as my friend and companion for eternity? My Father, I cannot. Those whom thou hast united nothing can separate. In earlier days I met in the path of life one whom I loved warmly and passionately. He was next to my heart always. Now he is far away. Yet is he near, my God. The mysteries of true love who can comprehend? Teach me, Everlasting God, to be faithful and affectionate in my heart, to all those whom thou hast brought to me and linked to my soul as friends and co-workers in thy kingdom.

PURE EYE.

SALVATION is in the eye, O my God. Therefore I beseech thee to purify mine eyes, and give me the power of seeing things in their true light. Teach mine eyes to see the hollowness and unreality of the riches and pleasures of the world, and turn with joy to thee as the only Reality I ought to love. May I by looking constantly at thy holy face sanctify mine eyesight altogether, and learn to cast pure glances upon all objects and persons. Dwell in mine eye, my Father.

POVERTY.

LORD, like other good things poverty too ebbs away from the heart after a time unless it is duly and prayerfully watched. As the world guards riches, may I, Merciful Father, be enabled through thy mercy to guard my highest treasure on earth, my poverty and lowliness of spirit. Grant that I may be as diligent and prayerful in acquiring as in keeping that treasure.

PRIDE.

MORE humility vouchsafe unto me, O my Father. Pride is my bitterest enemy. It defiles my heart as nothing else can, and shakes the very foundations of faith, love and purity. I think I am humble if I can only bow reverently before thee and acknowledge my nothingness. Thus I deceive myself. Before my brother and sister I cannot bring down my arrogant head. The dust of their feet I do not yet accept as the means of my salvation. Crush my pride hard as stone, and make me humble and meek.

COMMUNION.

YOGA philosophy taught me, O God, that on the shores of the ocean of eternity, there is a house where the weary traveller finds peace and forgets sorrow. I thank thee, thy merciful guidance has at last enabled me to find that house in my inmost soul. It is so quiet; its solemn stillness makes communion with thee quite natural, easy and sweet, while its extremely favorable situation, being contiguous to eternity, draws the heart away from this world, and prepares it for the next. Help me, Unseen Spirit, to dwell with thee there, for thou art a Secret God, and lovest solitude.

LOWLINESS.

O How difficult it is to be poor! I have tried, I have struggled, but poverty, sweet and heavenly poverty, is far from me. Lord, I have entered the hermit's cottage, and put on his rude tattered raiment, and I eat and live in a lowly style. Yet am I not poor. My heart is yet the heart of a rich man, proud, haughty and fond of the pleasures and luxuries of the world. O God, humble my spirit, and make my heart poor and lowly.

SELF-SURRENDER.

WHY do I fancy, O God, that there is such a being as I, with independent rights and possessions on earth? I, as an independent master, do not exist except in my own imagination. If I exist, O Lord, it is only as a born slave whose every thing is sold and therefore belongs to others. Help me, Father, to realize this my true position, and to feel deeply that not only my earthly possessions but even *ego* itself belong to those around me.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUL.

I AM sadly deficient, O my God, in the knowledge of the geography of the soul, and I beseech thee to enlighten me. Thy wise and devoted children are enabled with the light of such knowledge to travel through the various countries within, seeing and enjoying all interesting places and gathering treasures here and there. Teach me Lord, where are those hills of faith, valleys of communion, gardens of love, oceans of peace of which seers and prophets have spoken so eloquently. Tell me also, Kind Teacher, where, hid in deep places, lie those inexhaustible mines of spiritual wealth which have made so many of thy devotees truly rich. O God, teach me the geography of the inner regions, and vouchsafe unto me a complete knowledge of the heights and depths of the soul.

PROVIDENCE.

O God, I magnify and praise thy unbounded love it is true, but I feel that I must now and then minify thy mercy and try to realize only that much of it which has been actually experienced by me in my life. That thou art infinitely good I believe in theory only, but I cannot conceive its vastness. Teach me to feel thy love as it is vouchsafed unto me in small measure from day to day, and grant that I may hold and enjoy it as a sweet reality.

OLD TRUTHS.

IN my attempts to acquire new truths, I am apt to forget old lessons, Grant, O my Saviour, that my interest in the old testament of thy dealings with me may continue unabated and ever fresh. Grant that I may now and then call to mind all those truths and joys which thou didst confer upon me in days gone by, and learn to love and worship thee as my Friend and Guide for ever.

HUMILITY.

GREAT God, enable me to feel how small I am. In thy majestic presence I am but a worm crawling on the earth, a mere grain of sand. Let me hide myself in shame under an over-powering sense of my utter worthlessness. What am I, O God, before thee? I am as nothing. Lord, teach me humility.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

EXPLAIN to me, O my God, the doctrine of the communion of saints. The best and truest men have gone to thee from this world of sin and sorrow, to dwell with thee in joy and blessedness for ever. Their company I seek, O Lord, next to thy holy company. Though they are absent thou canst make me dwell with them in spirit now and then and profit by their sanctifying and gladdening presence. Grant me this privilege for thy mercy's sake.

SECRET MESSAGE.

If there are deep and secret messages which thou wouldst communicate to me for my soul's benefit, draw me, O Loving Guide, into some hidden place, and there reveal the glad tidings. Tell me where thou wilt speak to me, on the top of the hill or the banks of the river or in a rural retreat, and I will be there at the appointed time and wait for thy heavenly voice. O God, I wish to be instructed by thee in the deeper counsels of heaven.

INDIVIDUALITY.

O THIS wicked and miserable individuality! Grant, O God, that I may soon be free from it. I would merge my proud self in thee and in the community. I would have no distinct and selfish personality; I would not live for myself, but for the world. Teach me, my Father, to live in mankind and for the good of mankind. May I be absorbed in humanity's cause. O Lord, root out self and selfishness make me one with those around me.

RESIGNATION.

My friends complain, O my God, that I do not attend sufficiently to the wants of my wife and children. If I neglect my duties to them I am guilty before thee. But my conscience tells me that in this matter I practise the rule of resignation. My wife and children are in thy hands. My life is in thy hands. Teach me to believe that I ought not to think anxiously about our food or raiment. May we trustingly worship thee and serve thee, and leave all the rest with thee.

SPIRITUAL UNION.

SHALL we meet in heaven, O Lord. Thou sayst we shall if we are united in spirit here on earth. It grieves us to find there is no such loving union among us, and that, therefore, there is little prospect of our forming one loving family in heaven. Give us, Kind God, such love and purity as shall knit us together for time and eternity in thy holy house.

A MESSENGER FROM HEAVEN.

A PRETTY little bird, flew away from yonder tree across the path of my vision. I addressed it as thy messenger, O Loving God, and asked if it had any message from heaven for me. It spoke not, yet I was comforted. I devoutly trust, O Lord, thine inspiring dove will some day bring me glad tidings from above.

VOICE OF NATURE.

WHEN the world was young they say, birds and beasts spoke, and all material objects too. They speak still, O God, if only my soul is young enough as a child to understand them. They speak, indeed, with charming eloquence to the believing heart. Does not the moon speak? Do not the roses speak? Yes sayest thou. O God, grant that I may always joyfully converse with nature.

SMALL THINGS.

IN my ambition to promote great reforms, I have, O Lord, forgotten smaller duties and neglected the smaller sins of my life. My attention and interest are fixed upon important matters affecting the welfare of nations. My heart is busy with national reform movements, and has neither time nor inclination to attend to its own reformation. Help me, Lord, to attend to the minutest things of life and to remove every little blot on my character. Teach me to be anxious about all the details of daily duty, and make me mindful of all the relationships which bind me to those around me. Great God, my salvation depends no less upon little things than upon great movements. May I believe that nothing is too small for my concern which thou dictatest for my performance, and that nothing is too trivial, which thou commandest me to eschew.

TEACHER.

FATHER, thy child is tired of receiving advice from those around. From the earliest days of my religious life I have been accustomed to receive enlightenment and inspiration beneath thy heavenly throne. Thy voice has taught me religion and ethics through faith and conscience, and other voices, therefore, seem altogether foreign and unintelligible to me. O Lord, thou knowest I have always been a pupil in thy school, and acknowledge no other master but thee. Let none come to teach me, for I shall be misled if I trust earthly teachers. Be thou my Bible and my Veda. Be thou my only guide and instructor for time and eternity.

A PICTURE OF HEAVEN.

THINKING and being are closely connected. If I think often of the world, its temptations and pleasures, I become worldly; if I think of heaven, I must be heavenly-minded. But how seldom, O my God, do I think of heaven! That sweet and charming picture of heaven which thou hast shown me to-day, do thou always hold up before me. How happy that devoted group of thy loving children gathered round thy feet! Oh how happy, Father! May I constantly think of their heavenly joy and seek it?

TEARS.

O GOD, I glorify tears. They are my friend and helper. In them I find light and strength and joy. If my eyes are dry I apprehend danger, for all my enemies seeing that the time is favorable to them begin to attack me. With tears in my eyes I see through them the rainbow colors of heaven, and rejoice. Grant me Lord, tears of love for ever.

THE LILY.

My God, I love the lily, the soft, pure lily, made by thy hand. I love it also because thy beloved son blessed that heavenly flower when he said, "Behold the lilies of the field!" Make my passion for pretty flowers a holy passion. May flowers and flower-gardens sanctify and sweeten my heart!

TRUE PRAYER.

LORD, I cannot pray unto thee, day after day, for the removal of the same vicious habit, unless I am a hypocrite and a confirmed sinner and really unwilling to part with favorite sins. One sincere prayer, uttered before thee, out of the depths of the heart, is capable of overcoming even the most inveterate sin, such is the power of true prayer, such the power of thy saving grace. How is it then that though I have prayed a hundred, yea a thousand times, my sins are not yet gone, my heart is still estranged from thee. Grant, O God, that my prayers may not be vain repetitions, like those of a hypocrite.

PROPHETS.

GRANT, O Lord, that I may love and honor the prophets and martyrs of ancient times, who lived and died for me, and grant that I may attain self-denying asceticism and godliness for their sake. Thou lovest me, and for my spiritual benefit thou didst send them to the world. Bless their lives and examples unto my sanctification. How much sorrow they suffered, what painful humiliation, infamy, persecution and death, all for my salvation! O Father, give me such faith and devotion that I may always realize my personal obligations to the world's martyrs and prophets, and strive after purity for the sake of their suffering and death.

IDOLATRY.

O GOD, this is the second of the three days of annual festivity during which all Bengal revels in idolatry and its concomitant evils. Teach us to remember thee during this trying season and invoke thy blessing upon our unfortunate country. Save our dear country, O Lord of nations, from idolatry and all that dishonors thy holy name. Save our brethren from dissipation and drunkenness and all the vices which accompany this idolatrous festival, but teach them to retain all that is good and holy therein. Almighty God, strengthen thy beloved church, and make it prosper in this land.

REACTION.

WHY this reaction, Lord? Is it because I went too far in the direction of spirituality and asceticism that I am now running with frightful speed towards worldliness and carnality? Is it because I saw too much of the dazzling light of heaven that I feel so miserably blinded now? Almighty God, I foolishly went beyond my depth. I soared too high, and have fallen too low. Save me, Father; save this ambitious and self-deluded sinner from haughtiness and pride. May I never boastfully risk my strength and devotion in hard experiments to which I am unequal. Lord, teach me humility.

WINNOWING FAN.

O MAJESTIC Reality, I see with fear and awe the winnowing fan in thy hand, which thou art using to purge thy Church of unworthy elements. Who shall stand? Who shall be cast away? None knows. The ultimate results of this process of winnowing who can predict? The heart trembles as it looks upon the ordeal. Father, what shall become of me? Grant, Good God, that I may not be gathered with the wicked and the unclean outcasts, but that I may find a place, however humble, among thine obedient and trustful servants. May not the high wind that is blowing, drive me away from thy presence! Lord, help me to survive the troubles and trials of the day.

IDOL OF THE HEART.

I DESIRE to behold and enjoy thee, O my God, an ever-beautiful and ever-sweet idol of the heart. The rationalists have put snares about me; from these, O Lord, save me. They wish me to accept thee as a dreary metaphysical reality, a mere intelligent or good something. I will not follow their path. But, Friend of my distressed soul, I will seek the beauty of thy face. Thou hast a face, I know, and of extreme beauty it is. The eye hath not seen it, imagination cannot conceive it: yet faith beholds that loving countenance. Neither hast thou eyes nor ears. Thy face is made of love and intelligence, power and purity and joy, for thou art Spirit, O God. That sweet face, Father, help me to see.

PECULIAR HABITS.

O LORD, they ridicule me and annoy me and find fault with my habits. But their criticisms are a snare, and they seek the destruction of my soul. Therefore I beseech thee, my God, my good God, to save me from the evil counsel of such men. If I am an ascetic and a *faqir*, they despise me and shun my company ; if I am engaged in the world's service, they hate me also. Father, I shall not be judged by men, nor would I follow their dictates. Thou art my only Guide. Teach me to do that which is hateful to the world but agreeable to thy will.

MEEKNESS.

MERCIFUL Father, save me from that vulgar error prevalent among us all, that no one can get on in the world if he possesses a meek and forgiving temper. It is generally argued that the helpless lamb must fall a prey to ferocious wolves, and that those who are resolved to turn the right cheek when the left is struck, must soon succumb to annoyance and persecution at the hand of their oppressors. Is it true, O God, that a good and forgiving man has no room in this wicked world ! Is it true that if we wish to live and do our duty, we must take an eye for an eye ? Thy dear name, O Lord, of the Long-suffering is a reply to this question, and I will no longer be an enemy of forgiveness. Teach me patience and curb my anger. Teach me that if my enemies harass me I must continue to love them, for thou lovest me, Good God, although I am thine enemy. Lord, make me meek as a lamb.

MUTUAL LOVE.

NEARNESS, O God, has diminished our mutual love instead of augmenting it. We have lived too near each other of late and our intimate knowledge of each other's failings has sadly embittered our mutual relations. We know that those around us are our brethren in thee, O Lord, and our best friends on earth. Yet we cannot love and honor them as we should. Their little failings estrange us, and in small difference we forget the large bonds thou hast established among us. Is it age, O God, that has taken away the sweetness of friendship ? Father, restore thy sweetness, and help us to dwell once more as a happy family at thy heavenly feet.

A HOUSE AND TEMPLE.

GIVE me a house, O God, which shall be unto me a house as well as a temple. I have always regarded my habitation as a mere dwelling house and the church as a place of worship quite apart from the other. Teach me and help me to unite the two, so as to make my house thy house too, and thy house my house also. Plant thy holy temple in my house, and enable me, Lord of my life, to perform my daily duties and manage all my domestic concerns according to thy will. May I not adore thee as a mere Sunday Divinity, but grant, O Merciful Father, that I may daily and hourly serve thee in the midst of all the details of household duty.

TRUE GUIDE.

Is it safe, my God, to walk according to the counsels of men? My friends have often told me that if I wish to achieve success in my worldly avocations or my spiritual pursuits, I must follow the guidance of wise men and not trust my own judgment. Lord, I see no wisdom in the world; even its best men are not fit to guide. I gather more wisdom from thee through humble prayer in a day than the books and sages of the world can teach in a month. I will not, therefore, follow the deceitful teaching of worldly men, but in all things humbly seek the inspiration of thy heavenly voice.

HUMILITY.

To be humble before thy heavenly throne is easy, O Lord, but hard, very hard it is to humble myself before men. To acknowledge myself as thy servant costs nothing, involves no sacrifice; it does not wound my pride; it does not degrade me before men. On the contrary, it is an honor and a glory to be able to cling to thee as the dust of thy feet. But to be man's obedient servant is derogatory to my honor, and requires considerable self-sacrifice. Lord, teach me to be truly humble, so that I may be able to sit at the feet of those whom I look upon as my inferiors and those who are mine enemies.

KALPATARU.

THE HINDUS call thee *Kalpataru*. O God. Thou art the fabled tree that yields whatsoever fruit the devotee wishes.

Thou grantest all the desires of thy servants, and thou never disappointest them. It is not merely purity and joy that thou dost bestow upon them, but even those temporal blessings which are needful to them. Father, thou art not only their Saviour but also their household Deity, the Guardian both of the soul and the body, the Dispenser of daily bread as well as the bread of life. Thy beloved child is troubled with no want, for every want, physical and spiritual, is removed by thy loving providence. Teach me, Lord, to cling to thy feet, as thy devotees do, as my all in all, my earthly treasure and my salvation in heaven.

LOWER ANIMALS.

THERE is not a sparrow, not an ant, O Lord, that is not protected by thy loving and watchful Providence. Thou art kind not only to saints in heaven and men on earth, but also to the meanest reptile and the smallest insect that men tread under their feet. If thou art so kind to these dumb creatures why shall I not be, I who boast of being thy child and disciple? Puffed with arrogance, O God, I hate the little sparrow, and think it meanness to take care of the tiny ant crawling on the ground. And behold! I am infinitely smaller in comparison with thee, Great God, than these creatures are before me. And yet I despise them as low, while they are found deserving of thy love and compassion. Father, humble me to the dust and make me a Jaina that I may love and honor the least of thy creatures.

• LANGUAGE OF PRAYER.

THE language of devotion I employ in my prayers, and supplications before thee, O my God, has been sharply criticised by those about me. Thou wilt, I am sure, justify me, for thou knowest the secret of this peculiarity in the style I have of late adopted. I feel great difficulty, O Lord, in using stereotyped words and phrases. The language generally used suits not my purposes. My inmost feelings, my real thoughts I cannot express, nor can I suppress. Therefore, O God, I wish to use plain and simple language towards thee so that I may be true to my heart. I desire not to offer elegant prayers, but real prayers. I wish to talk to thee, my God, for that is my business, and not pray with a view to please men.

FEAR AND LOVE.

THERE is one thing, my God, which makes me very anxious. It is this. Having loved thee as my Father and Mother I now feel I cannot fear thee, as a transgressor like myself should fear the great Judge. The fact is, I love thee and yet I love and cherish my sins too. Assuredly my love for thee is not genuine pure love. So at least says my conscience. And yet I cannot believe that I do not love thee. Teach me, God, to harmonize sweet love with chastening fear, that I may while loving thee with passionate attachment, root out whatsoever is wrong in my heart. If I cannot fear thee, Lord, let thy holy spirit so sanctify my inner nature that there may be left no cause for fear.

MANLINESS.

TEACH me self-respect, O my God. Worldliness and carnality have made me mean and idle. In all things, in all my dealings with the world I am conscious of an abject dependence upon others and a servile expectation of services which are truly loathsome. I have so far demeaned myself that those around me hate my inability to take care of myself and my indolent and insolent demands for services which I do not deserve. Help me, Lord, to do the full share of the work thou hast assigned to me, with my own hand. Make me industrious and honest, active and persevering, and teach me to rely as little as possible upon the bounty and favor of others for my livelihood and comfort. Almighty God, vouchsafe unto thy servant manly and noble independence.

TRUST.

WHAT sort of home hast thou built for me, Great Architect, in the next world? Forgive my curiosity, and if it be wrong, kill it. If it be thy will that this man of clay shall not peep behind the curtain, into the mysteries of the future life, teach me to bow to thy decree and reckon my ignorance of what is hidden, a blessing. To know thy truth is a privilege and a blessing, but ignorantly and blindly to trust thee, O my God, where thou dost enjoin ignorance and blindness, is a blessing and a joy.

BROTHERLY AFFECTION.

I AM always busy, O God, in rendering unto others the services of the hand, and trying to please them with outward kindness and practical favors. My hand serves them, but my hardened and selfish heart is far, very far, from true love. Affection is exalted in thy scripture above charitable deeds, and love above sweet words. Merciful Father, teach me that genuine affection for brothers and sisters, that sincere solicitude for their wants, that constant anxiety and watchfulness, that untiring sympathy which alone can unite my spirit with theirs in the enduring bonds of loving fellowship. May I do as much as I can to promote their welfare ; but may I always feel intensely and deeply for those whom thou hast taught me to regard as members of my household !

SECRETS OF SALVATION.

LORD, how the more devout among thy children are going into the inner chambers to hear the secrets of salvation, while I, thine unworthy servant, stand at the outer gate. Father, when shall I join their ranks? When shall I sit with them at thy feet, and hear those sweet words which they alone are privileged to hear who love thee excessively. Thy published word I have read; thy secrets, O Lord, reveal unto me.

POPULARITY.

THE world does not yet regard me as its enemy. This distresses me, O God. I am sorry I am so popular still. They that serve thee and work righteousness are unpopular, and as they grow in faith and love they are hated and despised by the world and deserted by their friends. Lord, have I done nothing to merit unpopularity and odium? Have I not given thee enough evidence of my love and devotion to excite the animosity and derision of the world? My popularity is my curse. O God, save me from it.

SECRET COUNSEL.

I HAVE often felt, O my God, that thou hast some secret counsel to offer, and that thou hast been incessantly watching and waiting for an opportunity. Such opportunity has

not yet come. My soul has not yet turned towards thee in a favorable attitude, and message has consequently been withheld. When, O when shall I hear that precious secret from thy lips. Lord, make me fit to receive it and mercifully reveal it to me. To know that secret is to be saved.

DEPENDENCE.

WHATSOEVER cometh from thee, O Lord, prosperity or adversity, pleasure or sorrow, is good for me. Whatsoever I create for myself is a curse unto me, as I have learnt by experience. Often have I acquired honor, wealth and comfort by my own zealous exertions, but these instead of doing good to me proved in the end most harmful to my soul. Often too have I mortified myself, but self-imposed hardships have injured instead of helping my asceticism and devotion. But I thank thee, my Father, that thy rod has always chastened me no less than thy most precious gifts. If thou givest me gold it is as good as salvation. Teach me to seek neither gold nor starvation, but to trust thee and love thy decrees.

GOOD MEN.

LORD, I know not how to honor and love good men. I know not how to enjoy their company. My forefathers practised intercourse with good and devout men as a duty, and they educated themselves for holy company. Modern enlightenment has made me proud, and civilization has taught me false equality. When I approach an elder I feel no solemnity, and in his company I realize no sanctifying influence. Why is this, O my God? Thy devotees are not ordinary men. Good men are precious treasures designed by thee to enrich our souls. May I honor them as such, and whensoever I go to see them, I may previously fit my heart by prayer and humility to profit by their instruction and influence!

A DELUSION.

I HAVE strangely got into the habit, O my God, of crediting thee with all my ideas and plans. I, as thy servant, ought to follow only thy commandment, forsaking all that pleases me and adopting whatsoever is agreeable to

thee. But instead of doing this, I strive to follow my own plans and schemes and then I ascribe to thee their authorship. Having come so far in the path of religion, I feel it a humiliation to believe that I am carrying out my own wishes. I would fain believe that in all my doings I only follow thy leading, and I feel glad when people give me credit for obeying thy will and sacrificing my own. But self-sacrifice is a hard thing, and I am carried away by my own ideas, feelings and tastes, all that I can do is to make myself, and others believe, that every thing I do is the Lord's doing, and that all my purposes are Divine purposes. Thus errors and vices in my life become sacred in my estimation in the course of time with the imaginary imprimature of thy seal. Lord, deliver me from this delusion.

RESPECTFUL DISTANCE.

FATHER, in respectful distance is my salvation. Therefore do not allow me, dear God, to come too near to thy throne.

Child, neither too far nor too near. Stand there. That is thy appointed place.

FORGIVENESS.

LORD, having been long under thy teaching and influence, I am beginning to love mine enemy, however imperfectly, and I feel joy in forgiveness. How sweet to think of thy condescending love towards thine enemies!

I bless thee, child. May forgiving love take root in thy heart. Follow that great prophet who said,—turn the right cheek to him who strikes the left.

SPIRITUAL TREASURES.

FATHER, why hast thou taken away all my earthly possessions?

Because I wish to draw thy heart towards spiritual treasures.

SERENITY.

GOOD God, why hast thou made my heart so happy and serene in spite of outward troubles?

Because the heart, in which I dwell must be tranquil
and cheerful, or it suits me not.

FLOWERS.

I SEE thee smiling in the sweet jessamine I hold in my
hand. Father, bless me.

I bless thee, child. Love and honor each flower in my
garden.

MISSIONARY VOCATION.

O God, I wish to be a missionary of thy Holy Church.
Let thy hand ordain me.

Not yet, child. Thou art not yet fit for that sacred
vocation. Wait till I call thee.

POETRY.

THIS dull prosaic life suits me not, O Lord. Send me
Father, heaven's poetry.

Ask the flower and the zephyr and the moon to inspire
thee, and the more thou shalt commune with them the
more poetical will thy life be.

SELF-ABNEGATION.

I do not rejoice, Lord, for I find that it is my hand
that has got hold of thine. Then shall I rejoice when thy
Almighty hand shall hold fast my feeble hand and never let
it go.

So shall it be when thou hast completely cast away
pride and self-sufficiency.

TRUE CHARITY.

Heavenly Voice—I am well pleased with thee, beloved child,
for in my books I see entered against thy
name the sum of ten thousand rupees as
thy contribution to the Madras famine
fund.

Worshipper——My God, I feel ashamed, I do not remember
having paid a single rupee to the fund.

Heavenly Voice—I saw thee the other night shedding tears
over the distress of thy Madras brethren
with genuine compassion, and I heard thee
express a wish to give 10,000 Rs. to the
sufferers.

ABSENCE FROM CHURCH.

Heavenly Voice—Why hast thou been absent from my house so long? I have missed thee there for more than two months.

Worshipper—Lord, I assure thee I have attended church all these weeks most punctually and attended every part of the service.

Heavenly Voice—Thy body was in the tabernacle, true, but thy spirit I saw in the bank transacting business with a number of brokers, or in the steam yacht going out on a holiday excursion, or elsewhere pursuing gold or pleasure. If thy spirit is not in the temple thou art not there.

WOUNDING GOD.

Heavenly Voice—Why didst thou abuse me yesterday, refractory child?

Worshipper—I said nothing against thee, my God.

Heavenly Voice—But thou didst abuse thy brother, and whatsoever invectives were hurled against him came and pierced me. Behold I bleed, thou hast so cruelly pierced me with the deadly shafts of angry reviling

GIFTS.

Heavenly Voice—This pice, beloved child, thy gift to me, I kiss every day.

Worshipper—I never gave thee aught, my God.

Heavenly Voice—But thou gavest to that blind child of penury.

SINCERITY.

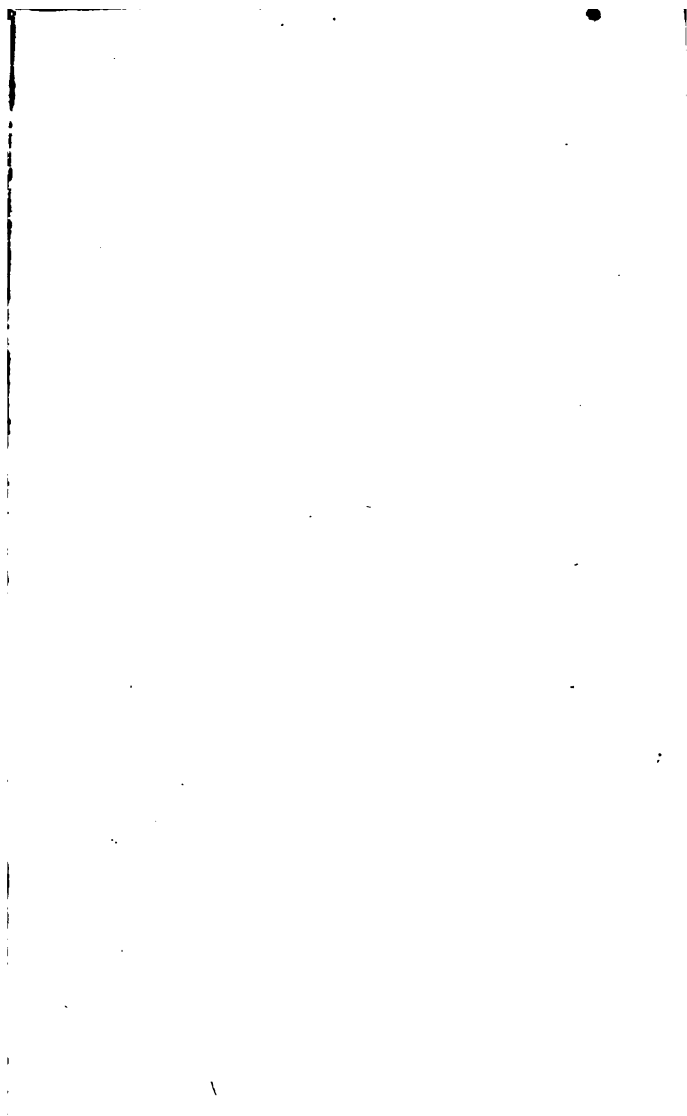
Worshipper.—I again approach thee humbly, O my God. Hear my prayer.

Heavenly Voice.—Thou shalt not approach me till thou hast redeemed the promise thou madest before me yesterday. Thou didst solemnly vow the renunciation of certain vicious habits, and thou comest coolly before me without making any effort to redeem thy

vow. Can man deceive me ? I shall have sincere and honest prayers. The hypocrite's words I hear not. Go and repent and then come with a heart full of sincerity and thou shalt be heard.

Worshipper——I am here again, O God, hear me.

Heavenly Voice.—Come, beloved disciple, sit close to my throne. I wish to hear thee pray. Thy tender voice I like to hear, for I know thou wilt speak like a child, and tell me many things about the joys of thine inner life. I wish to remain day and night with my beloved children. Therefore come to me often, and I shall give thee heavenly treasure.





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